

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| AAA LIFE INSURANCE, COMPANY | : | CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:10-CV-0158 |
| | : | |
| | : | (Judge Conner) |
| Plaintiff | : | |
| | : | |
| v. | : | |
| | : | |
| DEBORAH A. KNEAVEL, <i>et al.</i>, | : | |
| | : | |
| Defendants | : | |

MEMORANDUM

This is an interpleader action filed by AAA Life Insurance Company.

Presently before the court is a motion (Doc. 48) to reopen discovery filed by defendants Guidetta Alice Kneavel (“Alice Kneavel”) and Mary A. McAllister (“McAllister”). For the reasons that follow, the court will grant the motion.

I. Background

AAA Life Insurance Company filed this interpleader action on January 10, 2010, to determine the proper distribution of a \$100,000 death benefit payable under a life insurance owned by Clemens Kneavel. AAA Life Insurance Company named as defendants Clemens Kneavel’s wife, Deborah Kneavel, his two sisters, Alice Kneavel and McAllister, and St Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Alice Kneavel claims entitlement to one hundred percent of the policy proceeds pursuant to a beneficiary designation form dated September 11, 2008. Deborah Kneavel contends that a change of beneficiary form dated October 31, 2009, entitles her to ninety-five percent of the policy proceeds. Prior to the close of

discovery, AAA Life Insurance Company represented to Alice Kneavel and McAllister that it attached all the change in beneficiary forms in its possession to the complaint. (See Doc. 52 Ex. A). On April 14, 2011, Alice Kneavel and McAllister deposed Deborah Kneavel. On or around May 19, 2011, after the close of discovery, AAA Life Insurance Company informed Alice Kneavel and McAllister that it located an additional change in beneficiary form dated October 31, 2009, containing a mark purportedly made by decedent Clemens Kneavel. (See Doc. 48 Ex. A).

On February 2, 2012, Alice Kneavel and McAllister filed a motion (Doc. 48) reopen discovery for twenty (20) days for the limited purpose of questioning Deborah Kneavel about the change in beneficiary forms dated October 31, 2009.¹ The parties have fully briefed the issues, and the matter is now ripe for disposition. (Docs 48, 50, 52).

II. Discussion

The purpose of discovery is “for the parties to obtain the fullest possible knowledge of the issues and facts before trial.” Hickman v. Taylor, 329 U.S. 495, 501 (1947). The court has broad discretion to manage discovery. Sempier v. Johnson & Higgins, 45 F.3d 724, 734 (3d Cir. 1995).

Deborah Kneavel contends that Alice Kneavel and McAllister had ample opportunity to explore the multiple change of beneficiary forms at issue in this case and that reopening discovery would delay the trial. (Doc. 50, at 3-4). Specifically,

¹ AAA Life Insurance Company concurs in the motion. (Doc. 53).

Deborah Kneavel argues that the deposition transcript reflects that Alice Kneavel and McAllister questioned her about multiple change of beneficiary forms. (Id.)

The court finds this argument unavailing. The deposition transcript reflects only that Alice Kneavel and McAllister questioned Deborah Kneavel regarding the change in beneficiary forms disclosed by AAA Life Insurance Company in the complaint. Alice Kneavel and McAllister had no opportunity to question Deborah Kneavel about the change in beneficiary form disclosed by AAA Life Insurance Company on or about May, 19, 2011, *after* Deborah Kneavel's deposition. Furthermore, reopening discovery for only twenty (20) days will not delay the trial currently scheduled for April 2012. (Doc. 47). Therefore, the court will grant the motion to reopen discovery.

III. Conclusion

For the reasons stated in the above memorandum, the court will grant the motion. An appropriate order follows.

S/ Christopher C. Conner
CHRISTOPHER C. CONNER
United States District Judge

Dated: February 13, 2012

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| | : | |
| Defendants | : | |

ORDER

AND NOW, this 13th day of February, 2012, upon consideration of the motion (Doc. 48) to reopen discovery filed by defendants Guidetta Alice Kneavel (“Alice Kneavel”) and Mary A. McAllister (“McAllister”), and for the reasons set forth in the accompanying memorandum, it is hereby ORDERED that:

1. The motion (Doc. 48) to reopen discovery is GRANTED.
2. Discovery is reopened for a period of twenty (20) days from the date of this order for the limited purpose of permitting Alice Kneavel and McAllister to depose defendant Deborah Kneavel and question her about the change in beneficiary forms dated October 31, 2009.

S/ Christopher C. Conner
CHRISTOPHER C. CONNER
United States District Judge